(iii) Auxiliary Warning System for giving advance warning about 'Signal at danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Bombay suburban sections.

(iv) There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

(v) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and protable accelerometers are being progressively used.

(vi) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

(vii) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

(viii) Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.

(ix) Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

(x) Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.

(xi) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised including use of Simulators for training of drivers.

(xii) Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.

(xiii) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

(xiv) Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Decline in Domestic Passengers

*40. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a sharp decline in the domestic passenger traffic in 1996-97 as targeted;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATRAJAN) : (a) There has been a marginal decline of 1.52% in domestic passenger traffic in 1996-97 as compared to 1995-96.

(b) The decline in the traffic was mainly due to closure of some of the private airlines.

(c) The airline operators are being permitted to acquire additional aircraft so that more passenger seats are available for the travelling public. For example, Indian Airlines Available Seats Kilometers (ASKMS) have increased from 9973 million in 1995-96 to 11216.4 million in 1996-97. Jet Airways has also added four B-737 aricraft in 1996-97.

Development of Solar Energy

219. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state the amount of Central grants sanctioned for the development of solar energy during 1997-98 in the country State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : A programme on solar photovoltaics and solar thermal applications is being implemented by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources during 1997-98. Under this programme specific devices i.e. solar lanterns, home lighting systems, village power plants, street lights and some other PV systems and solar cookers are covered under a subsidy scheme of the Government. Grants are released to the States for these programmes on the basis of physical targets and after scrutiny of the claims following implementation. The grants released so far to the State during 1997-98 are given in enclosed Statement. Claims of some more States are being processed.

Statement

Grants released during 1997-98 under Solar Energy Programme

Sl. No.	State/U.T.	Amount released (Rs.)
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	990
2.	Assam	6,40,000
3.	Bihar	25,00,000